

A
JUSTIFICATION

OF THE ¹⁶
CASE

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OF THE
MINISTERS *ejected at* EXON,
AND

Of the *DEFENCE* of it.

Being, A

REPLY

TO THE

Defence of the Account, &c.

By JAMES PEIRCE.

L O N D O N :

Printed for JOHN CLARK, at the Bible
and Crown in the Poultry, near Cheapside.

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JUSTIFICATION

OF THE

QUESTIONS

OF THE

MINISTERS OF THE

AND

OF THE DEPARTMENT OF

AND

REPLY

TO THE

DEFENCE OF THE ACCOUNTS

BY JAMES H. H. H.

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IS no sign of a good cause; when men of reputation for sense and honesty, are ashamed to appear openly in the defence of it. The credit of the imposing party both at *London*, and here in the *West*, is very much concerned in the leading fact of our *ejectment*. Not only the Gentlemen who have been the immediate actors, but all their advisers, who do not think fit to disclaim their proceedings, might justly reckon themselves obliged to defend them. But, whether it be owing to the shamefulness of the cause, or some other reason which the world is not yet able to guess, the Gentlemen have hitherto procured none to speak in their behalf, who have thought fit to set their

names to their performances, except one who has taken care his performance should do them as little service as his name. 'Tis observable too, that the distant writers, who skulk about in such obscurity, treat of this point very tenderly. The *Relation*, the *Narrative*, and the *Subscribing Minister's Letter*, avoid entring into the merits of the cause, tho' the writers (if they are more than one) not only conceal their names, but shew themselves willing enough to favour their friends.

I dont wonder the *London* scribe should use so much caution in concealing himself, considering what materials are sent him to work upon, and how unwilling the collector of them here in the country is to have his name appear. This Gentleman is most ready to receive all the tattling stories that are brought, and sometimes by such half-witted persons, as are not the most able to give an exact account of the matters they would relate.

The *Account*, and the *Defence* of it, both which we have been told in print are published by the order of the *Committee*, as the thirteen managers affect to be called, abound with such a variety of these pretty stories, that one would, in charity to the party, suppose they are all collected by the same person, who has discovered his extraordinary genius this way, and condescended to be perhaps the chief agent of those, who have sought to lead the Gentlemen into the strange measures they have taken. 'Tis pity the Gentlemen should have suffered such weak things to be published in their defence, if they could have procured a better defender. But a bad cause that will not admit of a good advocate, must be content with one like itself.

I will not say, that the reason why these writers so industriously conceal themselves is a tenderness of their own reputation, and that they think that would be hurt, should the world be acquainted with their names; but I may venture to say, that can hardly be the reason, which a man might be apt to suspect. They cannot be ashamed of the orthodox cause, if they are, as they profess, sincere in espousing it; nor is it reasonable to suppose that modesty restrains them from seeking their own reputation, when they are so apt upon other occasions to cry up themselves for their orthodoxy, to the disparagement of their neighbours. Nor yet can this caution be the effect of any fear they have from the law of the land. 'Tis a good reason for mens being upon the reserve, when there is danger in speaking their sentiments plainly, and they know their enemies watch for an opportunity to *indict*, or *present* them, and bring all the inconveniences they can upon 'em from the government: but this they know is not their case, whatever endeavours have been used to make it ours. By the way, I cannot but think it disingenuous to cry men down as blasphemers, and let the government upon correcting them, when they are constrained as it were to declare and defend their own sentiments. Nay, nor do I think men should be termed blasphemers, when the gross mistakes they utter, evidently proceed from a weakness in the judgment, rather than the malignity and wickedness of the heart. 'Tis thus I judge of a minister, and of several people, who have asserted, That the Father is the Son, and the Son the Father: this is as gross a mistake as men can well utter; and yet far be it from me to revile those that have spoken so unadvisedly as blasphemers, or to endeavour to bring them under

der anytemporal inconveniences for it. But I leave it to these writers to account for their proceedings.

I come now to consider what is material in the *Defence of the Account*, and is not taken notice of elsewhere, particularly in a larger History of our troubles; which will, I hope, soon appear.

I know not what reason there was to impute to me a *supposition*, p. 3. *That they would not write at all*. I express no such thing, nor had I any reason to endeavour to prevent their writing. I thought my cause much favoured by their *Account*, which convinced many, who before could hardly believe the management was so bad as my *Case* represented it. I care not how much is written on their side, being very desirous this affair should appear in a true light. My conscience is so clear, that I fear nothing from truth and justice, and I doubt not to be able to detect the baseness of what is contrary thereto.

There is a wonderful passage, p. 4. which it seems the Gentlemen themselves are displeased with; for they have scratched out above eleven lines together in the corrected copy I received, I suppose, by the order of some of them. The copies dispersed in *London* being not so corrected, I shall befriend them in acquainting the world with this correction. I shall transcribe the whole passage, and put only what they have blotted out in *Italic*. Thus then they express themselves in what they propose to do: *Fourthly*, Make some remarks on several observable passages in Mr. *Peirce's* Defence, contrary to the sense of the Holy Ghost. *This we charged him with in our Account*, p. 4. as one reason of his ejection, tho', in his Letter to one of the Subscribing Ministers, p. 17. he says, "Twice they desired me to preach upon this matter; and if I gave then, or
" at

“ at any other time, such an interpretation as they
 “ thought contrary to the sense of the Holy Ghost ;
 “ why was not this laid to my charge, and made the
 “ ground of my ejection ? I know of nothing of this
 “ nature which my enemies have fixed upon ; ” and
 this we suppose is the confession of his faith made
 from his pulpit, *Defence*, p. 12. 'Twould have
 been strange, that any passages in my *Defence*,
 written after the ejection, should have been
 made the ground of it. 'Tis true I did, as I
 say in the *Letter* here cited, make a confession of
 my faith in the pulpit about this very point: but
 so far were they from making this an article a-
 gainst me at my ejection, that not the least
 mention was then made of it. And indeed how
 could this be made an article against me, when
 to this day they are not able to tell what I said,
 pretending I spoke too fast for the writers ? Nor
 do I to this day know one passage I have dropt
 in the pulpit, that was objected against me at
 the ejection. I am thankful for one expression
 here ; I hope their dislike of it was not the
 reason of leaving out the passage : I mean where
 the pulpit is called *his pulpit*. If it was once
 mine, as is here owned, I would gladly know
 how I came by it. I dont remember, that the
 Thirteen, or the proprietors, as such, gave me
 possession ; and if it was mine by the grant of
 the people, I can't imagine how any could have
 a just right to take away the possession, but those
 who had a right to give it.

My *Case* was only designed to give a short
 account of what was done at the ejection,
 things previous to it being intended to be rela-
 ted in a larger account I had in hand. I there-
 fore did not overlook any of the facts which the
Account brought in, as the *Defence* charges me
 very disingenuously, p. 6, but waved the present
 consideration

consideration of them, promising to examine them all in a larger history, as I have done. See my *Defence*, p. 4. This writer may please himself in his mean misrepresenting this matter; but it really exposes him to all fair readers.

I will again for shortness, and to avoid repetitions, refer to that account with relation to these facts, and only mention two. One fact, p. 5, is, that I should say, *I could not help it, if the scripture made Christ such a God, as after the day of judgment should have no rule, authority, or power.* Now I ask him, whether he can any more help it, than I can? Let me parallel this: A noted minister of this county, and a ringleader in our quarrel, being urged with the contradiction there was in his assertions, answer'd: "He would leave God to reconcile his own contradictions." Now what could be the meaning of my saying, but that I could not reconcile 1 Cor. xv. with another supposed scriptural assertion? And what could be the meaning of his, but that he was not able to reconcile God's contradictions? And are not these much alike? Either then let us both be innocent, or both guilty.

It seems I should say, I did not *understand the doxologies.* And the reason was, because I took them to be sometimes nonsense, as indeed that was which provoked me to forbid the singing them, which concluded, I remember, thus:

Eternal honour let be done

From first to last for evermore.

Let any understanding reader judge, whether I did ill to forbid such doxologies as these when I preached.

He pretends, p. 6. that *my remarks upon some few of the facts, can appear to the world to be nothing but meer evasion.* I leave him to the world's censure for the meanness of this reflection, till he

he is pleased to produce some evidence of the truth of what he says.

I defy him, and all his friends, to mention any one instance of honour, or worship, which the scripture directs us to give to the Holy Ghost, which I have omitted.

As to the *subordination* in the Trinity, I declare I never held any other than a relative subordination; nor do I conceive any other to be possible. This is what the generality of divines have held; if this is inconsistent with any thing they have maintained beside, they must look to that; I pretend not that I agree with them any farther than their own declarations are plain and express; and if there is an inconsistency in their notions, 'tis a sign the evidence is the more clear in behalf of the notion, wherein they agree with me. But 'tis my unhappiness to have a person write against me, who either does not, or will not, understand what authors are alleged for.

To shew there is evidence of my being in an error, he saith, *I stated the new notion of the unity of the Godhead, which they take to be a very great error.* I am confident this would not pass for evidence in any court in *England*, or perhaps in the world, except in the office of the holy inquisition. I cant easily think all the Thirteen agreed in directing the publication of this paper; for besides two who have denied it, there is one among them who understands the nature of evidence too well, to approve of what is so carelessly written. But I stated no new notion, but the old scripture notion according to the best of my apprehension. The next thing is answered in the larger account.

Mr. *Hallet* was produced as a witness, that *I propagated these notions.* But tho' he fails them, B
they

they are not satisfied. Every one sees I am not concerned in the matter, unless he would abide by the testimony they pretend he gave. I leave it to him to answer, as he designs, for himself; tho' I think 'twould be hard that any writer should be censured upon the report of such a writer, as the author of the *Defence*.

There being no one fact proved upon me, whereby it appears I had the least hand in raising this controversy, I may justly repeat what I said, that *our righteousness shined as the light, and our judgment as the noon-day*. I pray God I may always have as clear a conscience in all my future publick conduct, as I have in this.

The reason why *only two of the facts charged on my communicants were taken notice of* was, because no more were charged. See the *Account*, p. 7, 24.

As to the first of these, says he, which was charged on one of his communicants, that he should say, 'Tis no sin to say Christ is but a creature. Mr. Peirce represents it as if it were only spoken once. I think it signifies little, whether it was spoken once only, or afterwards related again to such as inquired about; nor can I think it any defect, that I took no notice of a circumstance not at all material in itself, nor hinted in the *Account* in the least that I remember. But after all his expression was only this, "That he would not say he sinned that said so." He did not say he did not sin; but left the matter to be determined by one who is better able to judge. I should have esteemed this a sign of a man's modesty; I am sorry it should give so much offence to our author. I dare say he owned the charge no otherwise than I have related: and our author might have saved himself the trouble of acquainting the world, that he owned it privately,

ly, when he really did it publicly, it being evident I printed his own account. It might save us some words on both sides, if our author would forbear to mention things that signify nothing.

The same person denies, that he ever *asked what text there was to prove that Christ was God*, and challenges this author to name his vouchers.

The too frequent uncharitableness of those who have censured their neighbours, as in a state of damnation, for disagreeing with them in their notions, may well be thought to justify those who have endeavoured to bring people to a better temper, by letting them know they do not perceive the difficulties there are in these controverted speculations. This was the reason of the same person's saying to a Gentlewoman, *He could shew her two texts of scripture to prove Christ a creature, that would [not make her tremble, as the Defence reports, but] shock her.* He neither named the texts, nor owned himself convinced by them; and therefore I see not how this is inconsistent with his *Advertisement*. I may be mistaken, but yet I will not stick to own my persuasion, that Christ will count himself more honoured by those, who endeavour to promote charity among all, that from a conviction of Christ's authority and ability as mediator, make it their endeavour to come to God by him; than by those who cry up his person, as tho' he were the supreme God, and in the mean time trample under foot his great and fundamental law of charity.

There can hardly be a greater instance of baseness, than what I now come to; and that I may set it in a true light, I shall give the following account, by which the reader may judge what sort of men we have to deal with. There was a report some time ago given out that Mr.

Spyring, the person we have been speaking of, should say these words; " He [Christ] hath no more to do in heaven, than a journeyman in his master's shop. " *Mr. Thomas Skinner* was given out to be the person who heard him say so. Hereupon he inquired of *Mr. Skinner*, who declared, and gave it him under his hand, that he never heard him say those words, or any other words in any manner derogatory, or reflecting on our blessed Saviour. This *Mr. Spyring* thought himself obliged to publish as an *Advertisement* in the *Neewspaper*, in his own vindication. With relation to this the *Defence* says, p. 10. *As to the Certificate in the same Newspaper under the hand of Mr. Thomas Skinner, we think fit to let the world know, that Mr. Skinner was not privy to the design of printing it, and that had his wife been applied to (instead of him) she could not have given the like certificate.* All the world must see, that the design of this writer is to maintain the report mentioned in that *Advertisement*, upon *Mrs. Skinner's* credit; and every reader would readily take it for granted, that she heard him say the words charged, tho' her husband did not. Unless this were the design, nothing could be more maliciously expressed. When the *Defence* was published, application was made to her; and *August* 20, *Mr. Spyring* published an *Advertisement* relating to it, " assuring the world " of *Mr. Skinner's* owning the truth of the certificate, and his signing it; and that his wife " (who repented the injury done her) had voluntarily declared before four witnesses, That " she never heard *Mr. Spyring* say any such thing " as he was charged with: that she could have " signed the same certificate her husband did, " and that she thought it but justice in her husband to sign it: that she declared she knew " nothing

“ nothing of the matter, till she saw her husband’s name in print, and that she afterwards talked with him about it, who affirmed, he never heard Mr. *Spyring* say any such thing as “ was charged upon him.” The party has been now tampering with that Gentlewoman again, and prevailed with her to sign a *Certificate* which they think to be in their favour, and which they published in an *Advertisement*, dated *August 25.* but which is really nothing to the purpose. The *Advertisement* is artfully worded, on purpose, as it should seem, to delude the world; nor does it contradict any one thing that was really asserted in Mr. *Spyring*’s certificate. She says: “ Where-
 “ as Mr. *John Spyring* positively affirms, in an “ *Advertisement*, dated *August 20, 1719.* that I “ could have signed the same certificate which “ my husband did, I do declare to the world, “ *I could not.*” Mr. *Spyring* never said she could sign it, but that she declared before four Witnesses she could; nor does she thro’ the *Advertisement* say she did not so declare, as the four witnesses are positive she did. And indeed it seems very probable, when she spoke before those witnesses, she did not dream of the little scruple they have now put into her head, by reason of which she is able to say she could not have signed. To go on with the *Advertisement*:
 “ That which the four witnesses proposed to “ me was, Whether I had heard Mr. *Spyring* “ speak those words concerning our Lord and “ Saviour Jesus Christ, mentioned in the certificate, *That he hath no more to do in heaven, “ than a journeyman in his master’s shop?* To “ this I replied, I did not.” This is a clearing Mr. *Spyring* of the grand thing charged, and to fix the charge of which upon him was the unchristian design of the *Defence*. Nor does she
 here

venture to assert, that this was all she said before the four witnesses, or that she said not what they affirm she did. " But I could by no means " have added, as my husband did, in the said " certificate " [The question is not what she could have added after they had contrived a scruple for her, but what she said she could have done] " that I had never heard him (*viz.* Mr. " *Spyring*) say any other words in any manner derogatory, or reflecting on our blessed Saviour; for " he hath in discourse with me denied the equality of the Son to the Father, which I take to " be a derogating from my Redeemer. " Is not this a fine come off, think we? The denying the equality of the Son to the Father is what Mr. *Spyring* never designed to clear himself of; he owns with our Saviour, that *the Father is greater than he.* And was this all that this honest man referred to Mrs. *Skinner* for? Let the world judge what regard is to be paid to this man's confidence, when he publishes such an *Advertisement*, and can tell the world, the authors of that pamphlet have kept close to strict and undisguised truth, not only there, but throughout the whole Defence. I am content the world should judge of the rest by this specimen. 'Tis a grief of soul to me, that men who call themselves christians, can thus play with truth, in so important a matter as the reputation of their fellow christians. I thank God I know nothing of this nature, that Mr. *Spyring*, or his friends are concerned in. And whereas in this *Advertisement* mention is made of his saying Christ is but a creature, and 'tis pretended this can be proved by the oaths of several; I cannot but take notice, that many of the reports picked up, and published by this writer, have vouchers who are not very capable of relating things with much exactness. As
for

for instance in this very case, one of these witnesses, I am informed, has been confronted by several others, who were present at the same time; and when they have related it as Mr. *Spyring* does, she has answered, That *that* was the same thing. And 'tis so common to report things not in the speakers words, but according to the hearers glosses and interpretations, that little regard is to be paid to many of them.

The *Defence* would improve this matter against me; and therefore adds: *And can Mr. Peirce say, that God hath not made it a sin to say Christ is a creature, or at least to allow his communicants to suggest it: when if he is revealed to be more than a creature, even to be the supreme God, it must be blasphemy to deny it?* No doubt no man can make that not to be a sin, which God has made one: but he that do's not see that God has made a thing a sin, cannot presently be charged with blasphemy for suspending his judgment. And if I must give my Judgment, I must say, I dont believe Mr. *Spyring's* saying any more deserves to be reputed blasphemy; than Mr. *Lavington's* saying, The Son was the Father, and the Father the Son; or that the Holy Ghost was Christ's Father; or that the divine nature of Christ was Father to his humane, and that it was to that Christ prayed; or that it was only the humane nature of Christ that was the Mediator between God and man, and that 'tis the humane nature of Christ that shall judge the world; or his virtual denial of Christ's being come in the flesh, by his placing the union of the two natures in a bare relation. I dont think he would less deserve to be put out of communion than Mr. *Spyring*. In truth I would have no person roughly treated for such mistakes, as honest enquirers may

may be liable to, for want of an exprefs and clear revelation.

His other fact is, that *several of my communicants, at least four, denied the Holy Ghost to be God at all.* When I wrote my *Defence*, I knew the name of one only who was so charged; and circumstances convinced me the charge was false. I have since heard of two more, who both deny it; and I suppose there is as little reason to believe it of the fourth, if he were known, as of any of the rest. They who will spread false stories of one person, as 'tis manifest is the case as to one of the four, will not stick to do it with regard to others. And he must give me leave to be the more incredulous, because I am sure of the falsehood of the reports his party have confidently spread far and near concerning my self.

But now supposing both these facts of my communicants to be true, what can they signify to the ejection? if those in communion said any thing amiss, could I take any notice of it, before it was in an orderly way laid before me, and made out by substantial witnesses? Nay, was not this as good a reason for Mr. *Lavington's*, as for Mr. *Haller's* and my ejection? Were they not as much his communicants as ours? And was it not a wonderful tenderness for persons to leave us, and run to communicate in the place, where the persons most complain'd of used to receive?

He says, *'Tis my opinion that communion ought not to be laid on what men believe, but only on their conversations.* I never was of any such opinion, but always thought the denial of such articles as the being of a God, that Jesus is the Christ, his resurrection, and the resurrection of the dead, were sufficient grounds of refusing persons

persons christian communion, let their conversations be ever so exact; and the like I say of any thing else, the belief of which the scripture makes essential to a christian. Shall I believe such reporters concerning others, when I am sure I have always insisted upon it, that there must necessarily be some fundamentals of the christian religion, and have on all occasions urged the practice of *St. Paul* in rejecting *Hymeneus*, as an evidence that men may be rejected for their opinions? But I will freely own that the fundamentals of the christian religion seem to me to be very few, and to be all comprised in the common Creed. It is likewise my opinion, that all christian communions should be so large, as to take in all those who profess to believe those articles (with an exception also for one or two dark ones) and who cannot be charg'd with asserting any thing contrary to them, or with any immorality. And with all such, let them be of what party or denomination they will, tho' they should believe neither the *Athanasian*, nor the *Nicene* Creed, I profess my self ready to hold christian communion.

Let the world judge, whether the things I have considered are better than the tattle of children, or were worthy to be taken notice of; and by these let the rest be judg'd of till the larger account can appear.

I come now to his *third head* of *Discourse*, wherein he undertakes to *justify the Proprietors and the Committee* (as he calls them) and to *answer my objections with reference to them*. And when he is able to do this, he need not be ashamed to put his name to his piece.

I charged the proprietors with a notorious act of injustice. He apprehends *the reasons upon which I found this charge are*, 1. *That the house was the people's right* : and, 2. *That the proprietors did act herein without the consent and concurrence of the people*. I have all along insisted upon both these reasons, tho' the *Account* pretended only to contest the latter. I asserted the former in my *Case*, p. 15. And as soon as it appeared, the talk ran among the party, that it should be proved the house was absolutely the proprietors, and that the people had no right at all ; just as this writer now pretends in the *Defence*. One of their friends endeavour'd to pump me, and to discover the evidence I had to produce for my assertion, that the house belong'd to the people. And as I was desirous that they might not expose themselves, by denying a thing so very plain ; I was not shy of informing him, who seemed satisfied with what I offered : and this I verily believe prevented their calling the people's right in question in the *Account*. Nay it is there expressly asserted ; for when I had suggested, *Case*, p. 16. " That they who were " dissatisfied should have withdrawn from us, " and gone where they liked better ; " the *Account* answers me thus, p. 19. *He would have had at least five parts in six to have gone out of a house which was their own*. This is an express acknowledgment, that the house was the people's ; whereas now he insists upon it, *That the house is absolutely and entirely the right of the proprietors*. And yet he would have the world believe, that in both papers he keeps close to *strict and undisguised truth*. Can these contradictory assertions be both of them *strict and undisguised*

undisguised truth? I would beg this writer, if he has the least degree of sincerity left, to inform me, how his heart came to fail him in writing the *Account*; and why he did not then, instead of granting, deny the peoples right, and produce his evidences against it? Have they now any more force in them, than they had at that time? If he was ashamed then to produce them, why should he not be so still? Is it not the true reason of his thus changing his note, that he finds upon trial made, that he cannot defend his cause, if the right of the people to the house be allowed? I hope all equitable judges will observe how suspicious this looks, and judge whether 'tis not probable, that this writer was once convinced in his conscience, that nothing could be fairly said against the right of the people; and when they have examined what he now offers on this head, I leave them to judge farther, whether it does not seem probable, that the same conviction may really abide still, in a conscience which from other parts of the *Defence* does not appear to be over nice and scrupulous, except it be in points of orthodoxy.

I shall now examine fairly what he has to say against the peoples right to the house. *We reply*, sais he, p. 11. *That the house is absolutely and intirely the right of the proprietors, and was never intrusted with them by the people.* That it is the proprietors in the eye of the law, I always granted; but that it is not so according to equity, will appear presently. People do not use formally to intrust proprietors with a meeting-house; but, for ought I can learn, 'twas as much done here, as 'tis usually in other places. The usual way is for some to be purchasers, or to have the property lodged in them for form sake; and the

only trust the body of the people lodge in them is, by paying in their money towards the charge. And that is trust enough, especially if we suppose proprietors in other places inclined to act like ours.

It was contracted for at first by Mr. Andrew Jeffery, Mr. William Pool, and Mr. John Lavington, who did it of their own inclination, and not from any order, desire, or request of the people's, and designed the house so as it might easily make two dwellings, in case the liberty should not have continued. Very well ; and had they made two dwellings of it, or had they built it at their own charge, no one would have contested their absolute and intire right to it. But his next words shew this was not the case. *There were indeed some other persons who contributed five pounds each, after it was far on in building, which contributions did not amount to one half of the charge.* I would request this writer here to answer me honestly a few questions. Does he believe in his conscience, that these five pounds were designed by the contributors, as so many free gifts to the proprietors, to increase their estates ? or that the proprietors so received them ? Does he not rather think, they both understood them to be contributions, toward the building a place of worship, to be used by the body of the people, who should also, according to the universal custom of the Dissenters, and all the laws of equity, have the choice of the ministers who should officiate therein ? Does he think, if the house is now clear, the original charge being paid off, as is probably the case, the proprietors can honestly put into their own pockets, what they now make of the house ? Would the contributors not making a formal contract, at all hinder their lodging a trust in the

the proprietors? Nay, does not this necessarily bespeak the greater trust to be lodged in them? Does he think the proprietors reckoned the people obliged to them for it as a favour, when they left them to choose the Ministers who should officiate there? Or does he not rather believe, they thought they herein left them the enjoyment of their own just right? Certainly every one must see the disingenuity of this writer, and the injustice of the proprietors.

But that I may set this matter in the clearest light, I will transcribe the receipt which one of the original proprietors gave to a contributor, leaving out only the contributor's name, which is of no moment. Thus then it stands in the original I have now before me.

Exon, Jan. 3, 1688-9.

I Underwritten do acknowledge to have received of Mr. N. N. the sum of five pounds, toward the building of the new meeting-house commonly called St. James, which I do hereby oblige my self: that if it come to be converted to any other use then now it is, that I will pay, or cause to be paid, to the said Mr. N. N. his due proportion, according with others that pay the same value. Witness my hand,

John Lavington.

From this receipt 'tis evident the contributors lodged a trust in the proprietors, by paying in their money to them, for the building a meeting-house, for publick use; and that their right to the house was understood to continue till the house should be converted to another use, that is as long as the liberty should continue, which was then thought to be precarious; and in case of the liberty's ceasing, and the house's being converted

converted to another use, they were to lose their right, upon having a just proportion of what they paid in returned to them. This management seems to me to have been very prudent. It could not be just the proprietors should be burthened with the charge of making the place fit for worship, and then changing it to another use, when it could not serve for that. It was reasonable therefore that when such a change became necessary, the house should be valued to them only according to the use it would then serve for, and the extraordinary charge should be defrayed by the people, whose accommodation alone was designed: and accordingly it was equitable the proprietors should, in this case, make a deduction for the extraordinary charges out of the contributions, and refund only the remainder to the contributors. And this shews the reason, why the people were not at first at the whole charge. The proprietors were secure of a good part of the charge, if the house should be left upon their hands; and their business was only to secure themselves from any damage as to the rest: and provided they were secure, the less they received from the contributors, the lighter they made the burthen to them, and the house in time would bring in what was wanting in the first expence. The original proprietors, acting like wise and honest men, did not seek to enlarge their trust, but made it as easy to the people as they could, and therefore refused many lesser sums, which they might, as I am informed, have received of the people. So that there is nothing in this paragraph, that in the least weakens my assertion, or supports my adversary's. I go on to the next:

And

And Mr. Lavington dying, the leases were by the consent of Mr. Jeffery made to Mr. Pool and Mrs. Lavington, and after Mr. Pool's decease, Mrs. Lavington assigned the same to the present proprietors, under the same rents she was liable to. These subsequent changes and assignments could not make the least alteration in the nature of the thing. And if the original proprietors had no other right than what is before declared, they could not convey a greater to the present, than they had themselves. And no doubt Mrs. Lavington assigned the leases, not only under the same rents she was liable to, but likewise for the same uses they served for before. He proceeds: None of the people ever entred into any articles of trust with the proprietors. The greater then, as I said, was the trust they lodged in them. But the receipts they gave shew it was in the nature of a trust. So that the first named proprietors were at the chief expence: I have accounted for that already. and the present stand obliged to pay the high rent, to sustain, maintain, and repair the premises, and at the end of the term to deliver it up to the landlord in good repair; and should it have been pulled down, as not long since was threatned, or any other accident have happened to it, as fire, or tempest, the proprietors had not the least remedy, on any of the people for contributions towards repairing it. All that he can make of this is, that as the people trusted the proprietors honesty, when they paid in their money to them; so here the proprietors trusted the honesty of the people, who would not have dealt honestly in my judgment, if they had left the burthen upon the proprietors in the case of any such accident. I dare say the proprietors will not warrant this writer to assure the people, that they would expect nothing as righteously due

due from them, if any such thing should happen; and yet I see no reason the people have to be at one penny expence, supposing they have no right in the house.

I must add here, that this trust has continually increased in the proprietors hands; for as the house has been continually more and more paying off the expence the first proprietors were at, the sinking of that debt has more and more enlarged the people's right, and consequently greatened the trust they repose in the proprietors. We are told, *p. 12. Tho' Mr. Pool is mentioned as one of the proprietors, yet was he not at any expence, the present proprietors having refunded his executors both principle and interest.* As this writer is against *disguising* truth, if we may take his own word, I think 'twill be very proper for him to let the world know, whether the other original proprietors have not been refunded whatever they insisted on, and did not voluntarily give toward the charge. According to his way of representing things, people who know nothing of the matter, would be ready to imagine, that the proprietors being at first at above half the charge, had never received any part of their expences, Mr. *Pool* only excepted. But I am persuaded this account, and the setting such a mark of distinction upon Mr. *Pool*, are not very honourable. And if they will lay before the world a fair state of their accounts, I am apt to think all the expence, or very near all, has by this time been paid by the people. Let the reader judge by this circumstance: About ten years ago a friend of mine would have purchased room to build a seat, but was answered that the charge of the meeting-house that remained unpaid, was but about twelve pounds, and therefore the proprietors re-

solved

solved to sell no more : and since my coming they made one family pay the exorbitant price of ten pounds for a seat. And if the whole debt is paid off, I cannot imagine how they can be looked upon as any other than trustees ; or how the intire right can be said to be in any, but the people, according to equity. But when their accounts are produced, this may be better understood.

And 'tis to be considered, that of all those who, as executors or administrators, represent the contributors to the building, there are but four that are gone off with Mr. Peirce and Mr. Hallet, whose families have enjoyed seats in the same for 30 years, or [and] might have done so still ; which undoubtedly was all that was desired, or intended. 'Tis nothing to the pupose, whether they were many or few ; they had certainly a right, with the rest of the people, to vote in this affair of disposing of the house. And not only had the representers of the first contributors this right, but likewise all those, who have since been helping to pay off the debt at first left upon the house. Nay I will add, that as by agreement the choice of a minister belonged to the three congregations, and I was chosen unanimously by all, not only those who met usually at the meeting-house we have hitherto been treating of, but those who met at the other two, had an equal right to vote in this case ; and therefore 'tis not fair in him to consider only what families left one house, as he does in the next paragraph. He ought likewise to have considered, that to have seats in the house was not all that the contributors desired, or intended ; but it was, that they might have seats there to sit under a ministry of their own choosing, and not to be imposed upon by four proprietors.

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prietors. If they could have been easy under impositions, they might have had seats elsewhere at a cheaper rate. The proprietors would reckon it poor consolation, if any one arbitrarily assumed an authority of laying a burden upon their estates, and should then tell them, their families had enjoyed their estates 30 years, and might do so still, under such an imposition, and that this was all that was desired, or intended; and yet there would be as much justice in the one case, as the other.

In the next paragraph he says: *There were but three families, who went off with Mr. Pierce and Mr. Hallet, who had purchased seats of the present proprietors, these have sold their seats again, to which the proprietors consented.* What signifies it whether they purchased them of the present proprietors or not? I have shewn already, that the right was not only in them. He ought too to have observed, the proprietors were never accused of injustice for letting the purchasers sell their seats, but for not letting them keep them and their undoubted right together. Now unless he has somewhat to answer to that, he had better let the whole matter alone; for his unskilful attempt to heal his cause, only makes the wound the worse.

But there is a farther aggravation of the usage we met with, of which I gave a hint, *Defence*, p. 20. tho' our author cares not to take notice of it. When an unhappy division arises in any church, I make no doubt the people have a right to determine by a fair vote, whether a minister shall continue to officiate among them: and in case the controversy is concerning the people's holding communion with one another, as well as with their minister, and the division proceeds to an

an actual separation, the major part, when the matter is fairly carried by a vote, may claim the place of worship, and expect the lesser part should worship elsewhere. But yet even in this case, they ought to use conscience, and act like christians; and as by forcing them to depart they put them under the hardship of a new charge, to provide themselves with another place of worship, they ought to give them some convenient warning, and be helpful to them, and make the parting as easy as they can. 'Tis unchristian, and even inhuman, to distress such as we are not satisfied to join with in worship, and to do all we can to hinder them from having any place or conveniency at all to worship God. And the case is yet more plain, if the lesser part are free to join with the greater, and the greater only object against the lesser, and forcibly drive them out from them. They herein consult only their own ease, and therefore should act with much tenderness toward their fellow christians, and lighten the burthen they lay upon them as much as they can. But instead of that, we have met with nothing but the directly contrary treatment. Altho' the controversy had been so long afoot, yet no warning is given us to provide ourselves in any convenient time; but all the little art and tricking is used to prevent our having any place at all. The actors in this affair cannot think we are so stupid, as not to have perceived what their design was in keeping us so long in suspense, after the keys were taken up by the four proprietors; or by what means we were prevented, when we might otherwise much sooner have obtained a fit place to build upon. Will their consciences never reproach them for these things? Will they never be able to imagine

themselves in our circumstances, and consider how they should then have been willing to be dealt with? Is all sense of our Saviour's law obliterated by a pretended zeal for his honour?

Had the two contending parties been only of one congregation, having only one common place of worship, the usage we met with had been hard, but as it was in our case it was much worse. We were three united congregations, and had three places of worship in common; and it had been easy for those who resolved to break communion, to have accommodated their brethren. The three places of worship would hold us all, and supposing we were, according to their own way of computing, about a fifth part of the whole body, one of the lesser places would not have exceeded our proportion. Ought they not then to have yielded us one of these? Let any impartial person judge in this case; and whether our author had any reason, *p. 12.* to *hope it will appear to the world, that what the proprietors have done in this whole affair, hath been consistent with the strictest rules of justice.*

He next proceeds to the other ground of my charge of injustice. *But should it be granted that the house was lodged in the proprietors as a trust, yet we think it a full answer to what he farther alleges, that the proprietors and committee had abundant reason to conclude, as we declare in our Account, p. 12. that they knew, and were well assured, that those that love the truth (the truth these contended for) would be of their mind in the main, and tho' acting for themselves, yet were fully persuaded that the people would concur with them herein.* I wish this writer had used a little more sincerity in his dealing. I spoke very plainly in my *Case, p. 15, 16, 17.* When the author of the *Account* comes to reply, *p. 18.* he

he chooses not to set down my words fairly (for an obvious reason) but dresses up an objection for me, in words of his own, and then makes what answer he can to it. This I complained of in my *Defence*, p. 15. and then answered however all that he alleged. And now when he comes to defend the *Account*, he hardly takes notice of any thing of my *Answer* from p. 15. to p. 23. I earnestly request the reader, who desires to know the true state of the question in debate between us, to read over those pages in my *Defence*; and then let him judge whether this writer does not studiously avoid the true and proper question, and whether that is not an argument, that his conscience told him it was not for the interest of his cause to have it examined. I have shown in those pages, that mens being for or against the truth, makes no alteration of their just right, and that the expression, which is here repeated, is an impertinence, as it amounts to no more than this, *That they were well assured that they that were of their mind, would be of their mind in the main*; which it seems is not ridiculous enough for this writer to be ashamed of. I have observed how unreasonable 'twas for the proprietors to take it for granted, that they only were the lovers of truth, or that their opinion must needs be the truth; and that were the truth ever so certainly on their side, yet the affair of the ejection ought to have been managed by the vote. He has his reasons, without doubt, for passing over these and many other things; but why should he again with so much confidence repeat an assertion, which he will not vouchsafe to defend; unless he has a mind to convince the world, that his greatest improvement is owing to his conversation

tion with weak women and children, whose custom this is known to be?

Well, since he shuns the proper question, I will submit to my fate, and bear the drudgery of answering the things he is pleas'd to offer, such as they are. He will now give the reasons why the proprietors were *persuaded*, that they who loved the truth would *concur* with them. I will bestow a remark or two upon his design before I proceed to the reasons.

1. This seems an acknowledgement that the people had a right: or else, what occasion was there for the proprietors to consider, whether the people would concur with them or not? 2. A presumption of a concurrence will not justify their act, but the actual and fair concurrence of the majority, not of those of their own opinion, but of the whole body of the voters. If men will substitute a presumption of a concurrence, instead of the concurrence it self, they bid fair to drive all justice out of the nation. A judge, at this rate, may condemn a man without a jury, upon a presumption of the concurrence of those that love justice: a king, may raise money without a parliament, upon a presumption that those who love their king and country, would be ready to concur in granting it. I hope those who justify our proprietors, will never more condemn King *Charles I.* upon the account of ship-money. I insist upon it, that an actual and fair concurrence of the voters was necessary to make our ejectionment a just act; and since this was wanting, the ejectionment must be an unjust act: and the proprietors being no more, as I have shewn, than trustees, they had no more right to act upon such a presumption as they did, than any other four
of

of the people. 3. In fact 'tis evident the proprietors did not act upon any such presumption, but one of them plainly enough declared the contrary. Witness what I say in my *Case* p. 15. "It being moved [*viz.* to one of the proprietors, after they had taken up the keys of the house,] "that the people ought to determine "the matter; he said, There might be a majority made perhaps by the small payers, and "they were resolved upon having the place and "ministers they liked, let the majority be ever "so much against them." By this, which has never been denied or palliated in the least, it appears they did not act even upon such a poor presumption.

Now let us hear his reasons.

1. *Many left Mr. P—'s and Mr. H—'s communion, and withdrew their attendance from any of their administrations. Several went off to the established church, and others attended those ministers who they were satisfied were sound in the faith.* I answer, those who withdrew, and had according to the received custom a right to vote, were comparatively few: and had not I on the other hand discouraged others from leaving their places, and coming after me, the comers might then perhaps have been as many as the goers. And if this and the following reasons were so satisfactory, how came there to be such a mighty concern about the getting the most popular preachers in our room, for fear the people should go after their former ministers? This has been given out as the reason of the delay there has been in choosing, and is perhaps the reason why they have in the mean time picked the country round to fill our pulpit, rather than let Mr. *Lavington* preach there on the Lord's days. But how unreasonable is it

it to urge against us, that some went off to the establish'd church; since some that staid with them have done the same since the ejection? If this then be of any moment, they may try their project a second time, and make an ejection of the rest of their ministers.

2. *Not only those who absented themselves from the places where they officiated, but even such as did not follow their example yet joined with them in their complaint of uneasiness, and it was the cry of multitudes, When shall things be righted? When shall we have other ministers?* Considering how industrious some were to teach others their lesson, 'tis not unlikely there might be some who talk'd after this rate; but that this could be the cry of multitudes, who had any right to vote in the case, does not seem probable to me, because I never heard of it before I saw this *Defence*: and the liberty this writer takes in other things, does not much incline me to depend upon his bare word. And if this amounted to such an evidence as is pretended, why were the proprietors apprehensive the majority might be for us? It follows: *Many withdrew their subscriptions, or paid but a small matter to preserve their right of voting.* I am glad I have now his word for this mean trick of many of his friends: Will the cause justify this too? Was there no injustice in this? Does he not know what promise was made at my coming? Had I not a right to its being made good, till I was fairly discarded? Where then was the justice of these persons withdrawing, and making the promise ineffectual?

3. *That on Friday the 6th of March, before the ejection, the committee met, and examined the list of their subscribers, and found but thirty three that they*

they were satisfied would adhere to the ministry of Mr. Hallet and Mr. Peirce, upon a separation.

'Tis this writer's unhappiness that what he alleges for one purpose, many times serves the directly contrary. This very thing betrays the more injustice in the ejection; because the question ought not to have been, who would adhere to us upon a separation, but who would be for a separation. I was always of the mind, many would have voted against a separation, who would not adhere to us upon one. But it seems the Gentlemen only consider'd who would adhere to us upon a separation, and when they apprehended their number to be small, they resolv'd upon making a separation, tho' they doubted whether they could have carried it for a separation. And does this evidence the justice of their proceedings?

4. Their fourth reason, p. 13. is in short, *That above an hundred of the payers signed a paper, declaring their resolution to adhere to the christian faith, and doctrine of the Trinity as delivered in the Assembly's catechism.* I answer, 1. That 'tis possible all these payers might not be, according to received custom, voters; for women are not, and yet 'tis said the paper was offer'd to such. 2. That all this was done after they had slur'd us, by the unrighteous and mean trick of shutting the doors of one meeting house against us. 3. That whether persons would adhere to the doctrine of the catechism, was entirely different from the proper question, whether we should be ejected. 4. That 'tis certain some who were for adhering to the catechism, were against our ejection; which can't appear strange, considering we did our duty faithfully, and meddled not with the doctrine of the catechism.

If the Gentlemen design'd to lay any stress upon people's signing, they ought rather to have asked them to sign a paper for our ejection. Suppose we had sent about a paper at that time against persecution; would they have allow'd, that all who could be prevail'd on to sign it, were against our ejection? and yet that construction would have been full as just as theirs. When, I heard of their paper going about, I was at a loss to imagine what could be their design; little could I think they intended to make this in time to become a cloak for their proceedings. Certainly with all considerate men it will rather expose them; for it shews they were suspicious, that had the fair question been put even in such an unfair way, they should not have found the desired concurrence; and indeed the more there is of little art and disingenuous policy in such proceedings, the worse they are apt to appear to the world.

Our author goes on: *That when on Wednesday the 11th of March, Mr. Hallet and Mr. Peirce sent what Mr. Peirce calls a fair summons indifferently to all the subscribers, they could not by all their mean arts and tricking get together above thirty one persons (according to information from two that were present): I can truly say they seem'd considerably more to me, and upon a slight recollection, when I came to consider this, I could recover the names of more, who to the best of my remembrance were present. But supposing, tho' I dont believe it, that no more were present than are pretended; yet since the summons was fair, and this writer has nothing to say to prove the contrary, the meeting was to be esteem'd a general one, notwithstanding the absence of any who might be ashamed to hear what*

what was to be said against their proceedings. It is according to the rules of all such bodies, that when a fair summons is sent, those that meet, tho' a small number, may form resolutions for the whole. The resolutions of our House of Commons are not the less valid for the absence of six parts of the members, when the seventh meet according to due order.

But I would request this writer to explain what he here means by *our mean arts and tricking*. The reader cannot but have observed how these things have run thro', I may say, almost every part of the management against us, that has hitherto come under consideration. Is it not then a little hard that he should endeavour to fix upon us the disgrace of that, from which his own cause has reap'd in a manner all its advantages? I can truly say, I abhor all mean arts and tricking; and defy him, and all his abettors, to tax me fairly with any one; and in the present case, I think there could be no mean art or tricking used, without my being privy to it, as I declare I am to none. All that was done, that I know of, was this, that one or two persons were employed to go round indifferently to all subscribers, in Mr. *Hallet's* and my name, to desire them to give us a meeting. Is there any shadow of mean art or tricking in this? If our author knows of any thing more, let him tell the world what it is: and if he cannot, I think he ought to pass for a reviler and slanderer of his innocent neighbours, in which I would have him consider no orthodoxy will be sufficient to justify him. And what does he think of the conduct of his friends on this occasion? We wanted a convenient place, to which we should summon the people, and

civilly desired of one of the proprietors of the little meeting house the use of it upon that occasion, when no other use was made of it; but this, as poor a matter as it was, after some shuffling answers, was denied us (meanly enough, I think) and we were forced to meet in a private house.

He adds: *Three of which* [those that met] *were no subscribers*: This may be true, for ought I know; as I never much enquired into the lists here, or elsewhere; there might be so many, who either came to subscribe or give attendance. *and four others, as soon as they heard the ministers complaint, went away, and did not condemn our proceedings, and approve their conduct, as Mr. Peirce says they that met them did,* nemine contradicente. If this Gentleman did not so continually discover a spirit of contradiction, an intelligent reader might imagine that he speaks here, in his awkward manner, by way of confirmation. If their proceedings were condemn'd, and our conduct approv'd, none present testifying their dissent, is not that the very thing I asserted, in my words which were these: "And that arbitrariness" and injustice was condemned, and the ministers conduct approv'd, *nemine contradicente?* Did not this writer know the meaning of those words, which use has made so familiar to *English* readers? Or is it necessary to tell him that they signify, *no one gainsaying*, which was exactly the case I spoke of? He adds: *By this it appears, that there were but about twenty four subscribers that did censure our proceedings, or approve their conduct, of which number three have since left them.* As I dont take his word for the number he speaks of, so I doubt not that he knows there were several who were absent, who would
neither

neither approve their proceedings, nor censure our conduct. And I persuade my self, he will not easily procure even those that have left us to justify them and condemn us; so that these poor subterfuges can add but little credit to his cause. A little modesty, one would have thought, might have made this writer forbear to mention this, considering the arts that have been used by his party against us. We have been notoriously slander'd and revil'd, insulted and abus'd, as we are still in the streets, and such as adhered to us threatened with the loss of their trade. These must be own'd to be great temptations, and have been the arts most successfully us'd against us: and one would think it to be more than humane rage, first to use such arts, and then to insult us with the success of them, and resent our complaining of the persecution we have endured at their hands.

But that which gave the committee and proprietors intire satisfaction, was the meeting of at least eighty eight of the subscribers, who all agreed in the fitness of the measures that had been taken. No doubt the Gentlemen could be easily satisfied, or this would have signified very little. And what an unconscionable writer is this, who pretends to answer my *Defence*, without taking notice of what I say to this matter? I have shown there, *p.* 18. That as the act was unjust in the doing, so nothing subsequent could make it become just; that at that meeting we were by a new course of proceeding accused and condemned, without being suffered to speak for our selves, and without our friends being suffered to speak for us; that the meeting was not a fair one of the body of the people, but a juncto or cabal of such as they expected would join with them, the summons
being

being sent only to such, and not, as in justice it ought to have been, indifferently to all. Besides, so afraid were they of having their doings exposed by those of the other side, that they would not appoint the meeting at the usual place, the meeting-house, where they could not with any decency exclude any of the people who had a right to come; but in a private house, where they refused our friends admission, when they sent and desired it. By these and other arts, too common at elections of members of Parliament, they made a prey of the people, and got them to sacrifice the most valuable right which the Dissenters have been so long contending for. Besides, they had before by their violent ejecting us let the poor people see, they were resolved, right or wrong, we should officiate where we used no more; and so they were left to choose whether they would submit to their arbitrary power, or lose their accustomed seats, and be utterly at a loss for a place and conveniency for the worship of God. And as low a consideration as this is, there is too much reason to think, that many were influenced by it to acquiesce, who would not have concurred in our ejection, if it had been, as it ought, beforehand referred to them; and many others by these proceedings of their neighbours became unjustly prejudiced against us.

But tho' this meeting signifies nothing at all, yet I will not grudge to consider the account here given of it. *It was, says he, at this meeting the Gentlemen of the committee declared themselves to this purpose: They had hopes of putting an end to these debates in a private way, but were disappointed, and were now come to lay before the people what they had done; declaring they had acted only for themselves.*
and

and not as having any authority over them; this we think sufficiently acquits the committee from Mr. Peirce's charge, Def. p. 18. This does not help the proprietors at all, who yet pretend to be satisfied by that meeting; for they manifestly assumed an authority over the people, when without their knowledge they excluded the ministers they had chosen. But to consider this with reference to the Thirteen; when they designed to give this account to the people, they acted subtly enough, in not citing such as they might think had a perfect understanding of the case, and were likely to oppose them. And how could they say, they had hopes of putting an end to these debates in a private way, when they were themselves the only causes of the debates they had with us? Had they not taken upon them to act at the rate they did, partly from the encouragement of the Assembly in September, 1718. and partly from the meetings of the seven Advisers, we should have had for our parts no debates at all. The three ministers debated with none of the people, except it were to promote peace, and quiet their passions: and so successful had they been in their endeavours, that all things were quiet and easy, till a few weeks before the September Assembly; as is well known not only to Mr. Withers, but to Mr. Lavington, who owned it to me. But after that Assembly the Thirteen took upon them to raise a debate with the ministers; we summoned not them before us, but they us before them; we objected nothing against them, but quietly discharged the duty of our places, according to the best of our skill. And who now were the causes of the disappointment?

In

In my *Defence*, p. 17. I said: " There is some-
 " what very aggravating in their conduct: for
 " tho' this controversy has been afoot these two
 " years, yet they never once called the people
 " together; but at last took upon them to pro-
 " ceed in such a violent manner of their own
 " heads, notwithstanding there was an order a-
 " greed upon at the meeting of the contribu-
 " tors, that a meeting of them all should be
 " summoned once every year; to which agree-
 " ment four of the present thirteen set their
 " hands, as I have seen in the *Instrument*. "
 Every one must see this bears hard somewhere;
 and our author was sensible of it, and finding
 that no fair answer could be returned to it, he
 endeavours, in his way, to evade it. Thus he
 answers, p. 14. *And as to the order he speaks of in*
the same page, that there should be a meeting of the
contributors once a year; he hath not made it appear,
that this was ever agreed to by the majority, either of
the committee, or the contributors. This it is for a
 man to keep close to strict and undisguised truth. I
 have reason to think, that this writer knew well
 enough that this was a resolution of the major-
 ity of the payers, and that because he could not
 flatly disown, he therefore endeavoured artfully
 thus to disguise the truth, which he may try to
 reconcile with his declaration in his *Advertisement*.
 But as I have now the *Instrument* before me, I
 shall transcribe it.

AT a GENERAL meeting of the payers to
 the maintenance of the four presbyterian mi-
 nisters of this city of Exon, it is this third of June,
 1713, resolved and agreed, That there be every year,
 in the month of June, a general meeting of the body
 aforesaid, at such place and time in the month afore-
 said,

said, as the members of the church commonly known by the name of the Thirteen shall appoint.

To this paper four of the present thirteen have, among others, set their hands; and if he will not take their word for what I asserted, he must have a mean opinion of them, and represent them as basely designing to impose upon those they pretended by this means to satisfy. So wonderfully has he help'd his friends in their distress! Let the world judge now of the fairness of the committee, as he calls them. And certainly never was there a vainer triumph, than what this writer presently affects: *Surely 'tis evident Mr. Peirce's narrative was not design'd so much for Exeter, as to impose on those that knew nothing of our affairs, and may satisfy the world what little reason he hath to boast of his veracity and honour.* I think I have no need hitherto to fear any impartial man's censure. As to my *veracity* and *honour*, I know my enemies have nothing to reproach me with; and tho' I have always, I hope, had a tender regard, as every christian ought, to these; yet I have look'd upon my self lately more especially obliged to take care of them; because my good friends, by destroying the reputation of my orthodoxy, have deprived me of that which effectually covers many defects in these matters.

This writer can hardly write a sentence fairly and pertinently, and therefore he goes on in his usual strain: *We submit it also to the judgment of impartial persons, whether after having had this general concurrence, there was any necessity of a public vote.* A public vote after the concurrence, or rather after the ejection, was not necessary, but indeed impertinent: I insist that it should have been before the ejection, and that the

ejection should have been made by it. *It being agreed on both sides no one would have been determin'd by it*: What does he mean? that no one would have been determined by it in matters of doctrine? That's wide from the purpose; but all on our side would, and I think all on both sides ought to have been so far determined, as to have acquiesced in what would thus have been regularly done by those who had alone the right to do it. *And the only use of that would have been to know the mind of the people, which hath been as effectually done by the method taken, and much clamour and contention thereby prevented.* Not a word of this is true. The only use of a vote was not to know the mind of the people, which might have been known by going and enquiring of them from house to house. A farther use of it was, 1. To know what their minds would be, when they came to hear the representations made by both sides of the matter they were to vote about. 2. To make the proceedings just and legal; for it was not the mind of the majority, but their mind publicly and regularly declared, that would justify the ejection: just as 'tis not the majority of the members of the House of Commons declaring their minds unanimously, when they are consulting out of the House; but only their giving their voices openly in due time and place, that can give any thing the force of an act of the House. It is again false that their mind (that is, what their mind was at the time of the ejection, as he must mean, if he speaks to the purpose) has been as effectually known by this method, as it would have been by a public vote then given. And lastly, 'Tis not true that hereby much clamour and contention has been prevented; for this would have prevented all the dispute

dispute that has since arisen concerning the legality of their proceedings. If he means only that this has prevented the people's debating with one another, whether the ministers deserved to be ejected; I say that was a debate which in all equity and conscience ought not to have been prevented, before the ejection: and 'twould be as just a defence, if a judge should condemn a man without hearing what was to be said for or against him, and should then say he did it to prevent much clamour and contention.

Besides, says he, on Mr. Peirce's own argument, if the proprietors have done wrong, it is to the majority; but what pretence can there be for such a complaint, when there is but about 34 out of 170 that complained of the least injury? This author must have a strange defect somewhere, or else he would not so misrepresent my argument. Where have I any such argument as he talks of? My argument is, that a wrong is done to the whole body, and to every particular person who had no hand in the ejection, in as much as by that act every one's right was invaded. Nay if the majority of the people had concurred in the contrivance, and not brought the matter to a fair and open trial, I should not have scrupled to have charged the majority with doing wrong to the minority. And I farther charge the proprietors with doing wrong to the ministers, by ejecting them in such an illegal and arbitrary manner.

I have now gone over all that he has said upon this head, and carefully answered it; I earnestly desire he will deal me the same measure, next time he thinks fit to write, and not so shamefully cull out only here and there a passage, and put me off with shuffling answers. I am resolved to have this affair set in a clear light, that I may

either repair the injury by a public acknowledgment, if I have wronged them by my charge; or else, by the blessing of God, may bring them to a sense of what I am verily persuaded is a notorious act of injustice, that so a suitable repentance may prevent any ill consequences of it. I only now beg them to consider, if their conduct is so clear as this author pretends, how it comes to pass that he, and all men of sense are ashamed to set their names to a defence of it, and that some ministers of their own side have not stuck to disapprove of it; and that the Assembly in *May* was so shy of meddling with the affair when it was started. I could mention several ministers who subscribed with the Assembly, who have upon occasion expressed their dislike of the manner of our ejection: I will only name one, and him the rather, because he spoke his mind since this *Defence* came down, I mean Mr. *Moor* of *Triverton*, who being in the city *August* 17. freely shewed his dislike of the method taken in the ejection, in his discourse with one of my friends. I mention this to his honour, and that the world may be sensible, that tho' he was one of the seven advisers, yet 'tis probable he was not wholly let into the secret by the chief managers, however he might innocently be outwitted by those, who cared not alone to bear the whole load of reproach. I heartily wish he may be more upon his guard, and secure himself more honour another time.

I come now to what he says in defence of the *Paper* subscribed by ten of the thirteen.

What he alleges concerning the *first Article* in that *Paper*, does not in the least touch my honour or veracity, as to the account I gave. The accusation against me is, that I only mentioned one
test

test as proposed to us, whereas 'tis pretended we had our choice given us of four. I readily own that the three others were proposed to us in a former conference, and that one gentleman, at the latter conference, gave once a general hint of them: if he says he expressly reckoned them up, I will take his word; but I am sure I acted honestly in not mentioning them in the *Case*, because if he mentioned them, I either did not hear him, or, if I did, had absolutely forgot it, when I wrote the *Case*, as to this day I am not able to call it to mind: and he that searches all hearts, knows that what I say is true. Nor could I have any design in this, since I always intended to speak of the other three tests as offered; to us and rejected by us in a former conference. And it really makes no difference with me, whether they proposed one test, or four, or four hundred; for if they are not of the best sort, I mean scripture ones, I will have nothing to do with any of them. What I said is not denied, "That the great thing insisted on, and urged thro' the whole conference, was that article of the seven," which was the test I mentioned in my *Case*: and because I thought the other three were not mentioned there expressly, or any more than once hinted at in general, therefore I said "I had the more reason to think, that the pretence they alleged was a mere shift." If they, as 'tis pretended, agreed beforehand to offer all four, and one gentleman actually and audibly did it, I was then mistaken in my conjecture, and it must be owned that this was no shift at all. I wish they will be as ready to do me justice, as to the mistakes they have been guilty of.

The

The second article in their subscribed Paper ran thus: *He hath misrepresented even that which was said, not relating it right, either as to the manner or the method in which it was spoken: and tho' this is not very material in itself, yet it shews the conference is not naturally represented, but artfully set out to serve a design.* This article which is owned not to be very material, seem'd to me to be very odd, and inserted only to increase the number of lines in the paper, as tho' they had been filling up a bill or answer in chancery, rather than exhibiting articles against a minister. In my *Defence* I shew'd them, even from the gospels, that an exact order of relation was not necessary, that I had related the conference as exactly as I was able, declaring I knew of no design that could be served by the way in which 'twas related; and withal I desired their assistance that I might put my relation into a better order. See *Defence*, p. 25. Certainly this was fair, and deserv'd a reply from those that had made such a complaint. And when our author comes to speak to this, and does not allege any one particular objection, is it not reasonable to suppose he knew of none, and that the whole article at first was a mere cavil? Has he then candour and fairness enough to drop this article? So far is he from it, that rather than seem to do so, he will talk of what is wholly foreign to the purpose. *Notwithstanding*, says he, *what he saith to the second article, we are assured that not one sixth part of what he represents in the Case, as delivered before the ministers gave in their answer, was so delivered.* Does he think any one will regard his general assertion, when he does not so much as name one particular instance, tho' he was oblig'd to it, to make good the charge

charge, and tho' he was so civilly desir'd like-
 wise to do it? And since intreaty will not move
 him, I now challenge him to shew any one thing
 put out of its natural order, so as to be capable
 of serving any sinister design. I am persuaded
 the order is not alter'd in any thing consider-
 able; and the more so, because I dare say, if
 he knew of any material alteration, he would
 not have failed to communicate it to the world.
 Whether any thing is inserted which was not
 then spoken, belongs not to this, but to the next
Article.

This, which is the *third*, charges me with
 relating two passages as spoken at the conference,
 which the Gentlemen say were not spoken at
 all. Concerning this our author says: When
Mr. Peirce comes to speak to the third article, he in-
sists upon it, he had not been guilty of that of which
we accused him; whereas we are satisfied neither of
those two passages mentioned in this article, were de-
liver'd by him to the committee at this last conference.
 Their satisfaction weighs here very little with me;
 for as I am very sure in one case, so circumstan-
 ces favour me much in the other against their
 negative. But I will speak to them, as he does,
 apart. Thus then he goes on oddly enough
 as to the *English*: *The interlineation of ten lines;*
nothing of it was spoken at the conference, as the Gen-
tlemen do testify, and no man more positive, that these
words were not spoken there, than the very Gentleman
Mr. Peirce appeals to pag. 26. My appeal to
 that Gentleman, was an appeal to him about
 a circumstance in the conference, *viz.* whether
 his words to me, *Then we have your answer*, did
 did not come in upon my speaking what I
 related in the *Case*. I am the more con-
 firm'd in my persuasion they did, because he
 gives no account himself, how they came in,
 as

as it would have been natural for him to have done, had he been as sure as he pretends in the matter. He goes on: *And yet here he makes not much doubt, but he spake these words.* Very true; and the only reason why I made any doubt, was that I had spoken them so often, that it was not easy, without some circumstance about which I could be positive, to say whether I express'd my self in those words at that particular time, as I intended. My intention to do it, the calmness of my mind upon the occasion, my thoughts being not in the least hurry, and its being so natural for a man to say what he had said so often before, and which may be thought to have lain uppermost; these things, and because no other probable account's has been yet produced of the way in which the said Gentleman's reply came in so patly, these, I say, are circumstances, which may perhaps incline others as well as my self to believe, they who could be mistaken in one case, may be so in another. Little reason therefore had this writer for his triumph: *And what retractions can be hoped for, from a man so hardy in a case, so fully and plainly against him?* If I had writ like this author, I should not have expressed the least doubt about the matter; and any person of ingenuity would have own'd it was honourable in me to acknowledge I had the least doubt, as I assure this writer I had but little; and now since his *Defence* appeared, have somewhat less than I had before: *And here we cannot but remark, that he must have forgot this when he saith, Def. p. 21. "Tho' my representation was, &c."* No such matter; as my words set down fairly will shew. I am speaking of their ejecting us without the vote of the people, and say: " 'Tis upon this fact especially, as stated in the

“ the *Case*, that I ground my charge of injustice
 “ in the ejection; and tho’ my representation
 “ [*viz.* of this fact, and the injustice of it] was
 “ most sadly complained of at first, yet it now
 “ appears to all the world to be in every part of
 “ it just and true; and they who are most con-
 “ cerned, are not able to say any thing at all to
 “ disprove it.” The fact and the injustice of it,
 are the same, whether these two passages were
 delivered or not. No one can imagine I pretend-
 ed they denied nothing I said: I owned they
 pretended these two passages to be mistakes, tho’
 I said they were not material, if they were so.
 See my *Defence*, p. 4. And it really signifies lit-
 tle as to the merits of the cause, whether I
 spoke this at the conference or not; for as I had
 so often said the same thing before, they knew
 well enough that was my sentiment; and if my
 saying it then would have render’d their proceed-
 ings the more shameful and inexcusable, their
 knowing it then, whether I then said it or not,
 will be allow’d by all reasonable men to have the
 same effect. And farther our author ought to
 have consider’d, that ’tis one thing for a man to
deny a matter, and quite another for him to be
able to disprove it.

I come now to the other passage; and I am,
 as he says, *very positive that I spoke* this, and ready
 to confirm it with an oath, if there should be
 occasion. For here the circumstances are so
 clearly and distinctly remembred by me, that ’tis
 not possible I should be mistaken: and I may
 say my regard to truth has been such, that I
 believe none that have conversed with me, will
 doubt whether I may be credited, when I am so
 positive about my own words. “ I remember
 “ very well (as I say, *Def.* p. 25.) I thought
 “ they

“ they were close and reserved in their designs,
 “ and did not care to let us into what they were
 “ about to do ; and that one end I had in speak-
 “ ing as I say I did, was to pump out of them,
 “ if possible, what they purposed to do ; and as
 “ I had no answer from them, I really appre-
 “ hended the reason of that was, because they
 “ would avoid discovering their design.” A
 man may trust his memory with such circum-
 stances more than so many negative witnesses ;
 and till I forfeit my character, I think I may ex-
 pect the world, and even these Gentlemen them-
 selves, ought to take my word. I have yet ano-
 ther circumstance that renders it probable that
 both passages were then spoken by me ; and that
 is, that those to whom I made a report of the
 conference that night after I came from it, are
 verily persuaded I then gave an account to them
 of my speaking both.

*But, says our author, even here the Gentlemen
 are full as positive against him. They can only
 be positive they did not observe, or do not re-
 member my saying what I am positive I did
 say. And one of them particularly watch'd when he
 would make such an offer, being resolv'd to have ac-
 cepted it, and was grieved that this offer was not
 closed with by the committee at the former conference ;
 and in all probability it was his offering to leave the
 city in that former conference, made him fancy he offer'd
 it in this. This is written very carelessly. I offer'd
 them not to leave the city either at this, or the
 former conference ; for I spoke only of my being
 laid aside as to my ministry, which I did not
 think it likely I should have any opportunity of
 exercising, provided I was laid aside here. I did
 not think I could with a good conscience quit
 my function by my own act ; if I had thought*

I could, I assure them I would certainly have done it; nor did I think the act of the Thirteen was sufficient to justify me in laying down; but if the people had fairly voted that I should officiate no more among them, and would have continu'd in communion with one another (as I always explain'd my self when people discours'd me on this head) I declare I would gladly have forborn preaching: but whether I would have left the city was quite another question. My thoughts in this case were wholly upon some secular employment; but I was utterly unresolv'd what to fix upon, and much more in what place, tho' it is not improbable I might have chosen some other rather than this. And how can this author say, *That one of them watch'd for this, and resolv'd to accept it, and was griev'd that this offer was not clos'd with by the committee, at the former conference?* Were they any of them ever resolv'd that the laying me aside should be done fairly by the vote of the people? 'Tis plain they were not. Were they ever resolv'd to hold communion with those who differ'd from them in doctrinal matters? Does not this writer declare the contrary? I make them still the same offer before the whole world, who shall judge of my sincerity by my future behaviour. Let the Gentlemen find out a way to heal the breach they have made in so extraordinary a manner, and adjust matters so, as that notwithstanding the difference of people's sentiments, they may continue to hold communion with one another, and I will engage them never to preach in the city again. And let it be seen what grief there was at my offer's not being accepted, by their readiness to accept it now, since 'tis not yet too late, if they have but a mind to it.

He proceeds to the last article: *As to the final message, Mr. Peirce in Case, p. 4. insinuates as if the Gentleman should deliver it without the approbation of the Committee:* What I said was, that "some" of them declare they knew not of it." not only the ten subscribers, but another of the Committee owns, that the Committee assented to the Gentleman's giving that answer, which sufficiently authorised that Gentleman to deliver it. This is to be taken for a confession that one of the nonsubscribing Gentlemen knew nothing of it, But I here repeat what I said in my *Defence*, p. 27. "Beside the" two nonsubscribers, one of which I knew declared as I said, I can name two of the subscribers who declared the same thing before "witnesses." I care not to expose them, and therefore shall only say, any one that pleases to inquire, may know both theirs and the witnesses names.

We are agreed in our accounts of the substance of the final and parting message; "That" "if we had no more to say to the Gentlemen," "they had no more to say to us," Concerning this our author says, p. 16. *Nor can we see what indecency there was in such a reply, or how it was inconsistent with their declaration of parting amicably.* I thought rudeness had been inconsistent with an amicable parting. Let the world judge, whether this message was agreeable to the rules of common civility to persons of our function, who have had a liberal education; and are of some character in the world, who stood in such a relation to them, and had given them no other offence, than that we would not submit our understanding to their discretion. Would the Gentleman who was so forward to bring this message, have sent a courser to the meanest porter

ter or begger at his door? Was it perfectly decent to treat us thus in his own house, whether we did not come without being sent for? But whatever is thought of this, I am content it should pass for the orthodox civility of *Exeter*, considering the usage we have since commonly met with.

I come now to the last part of our author's performance, his *Remarks upon some observable passages in my Defence*. I said there, p. 4. "The gross charge of injustice in ejecting us is not denied, but only sorrily excused. He says: *But it is denied Account p. 3. and p. 8. If those words are not a full and strong denial of the charge of injustice in ejecting them, we know not what can be so, unless Mr. Peirce will make a test for us to deny it by?* I am glad these tests are become ridiculous enough, to be the subject of our author's banter. I hope by the same rule, by which he here calls a form of my drawing up a test, he will allow a test was offered to us, tho' when he is out of the humour, *Account, p. 11, 18.* he seems sorely displeased with that name. But if it was so strongly denied, why was he ashamed to set down the words? Since he has not done it, I will do it for him. The first passage, p. 3. runs thus: *It was far from our thoughts to have troubled the world with the history of our case, if Mr. Peirce had not compelled us thereto by his artificial endeavours to make men beleive, that he has had unjust and unfair treatment, and by his challenging all the world to defend it.* I grant here is an unwillingness shown it should be believed I had unjust treatment, and by this an expectation is raised in the reader, that our author would answer the charge when he came to it. But this rather is to be reckoned a not owning, than a denying of such

such a gross charge. Let us then look to the next passage, p. 8. (*i. e. p. 12. of the London edition*) and even there he is not come to the point. He there gives an account of the citizens withdrawing from us, and then *appeals to all good people, whether they have not dealt fairly in this matter.* Now I never charged them with injustice in withdrawing from us, but only in violently shutting us out of our pulpit, without the consent of the people; so that this passage is nothing to the purpose. The proper place to look for the denial of this charge is, where he comes to speak particularly to it, p. 18, 19. where we meet with nothing but a sorry excuse, which rather looks like a concession, than a denial. The only thing there answer'd to what I ground the charge of injustice upon, that the matter should have been tried by a vote, is, *This we acknowledge would have been a regular way, and such as we should have chosen in an ordinary case.* This is a granting the course they took was *irregular*, which I understand not, unless it signifies that it was contrary to the usual methods of just proceedings in common cases.

I took notice in my *Case*, p. 10. "That there
"was no attempt made to charge us with deny-
"ing the true and proper divinity of the Son
"of God, even in the sense of the ministers ar-
"ticle; so that we had not fair dealing in
"that respect." The *Account* took no notice of this, which I esteemed a concession in my *De-
fence.* Our author, it seems, is displeased with me for that, and says the reason was, because *they thought it impertinent.* Let the world judge, I have shewn in my *Letter to a subscribing minister*, p. 30, &c. That all proceedings against ministers ought to be by witnesses, and not by an in-
quisition

quisition; and therefore I can't but think this very pertinent, in as much as 'tis certain nothing was attempted to be proved against us. I grant *the Committee*, as he calls them, *were no court of judicature upon their ministers*, that is they were not rightfully such; but I assert they up set themselves in effect, and acted as such. When the Gentlemen desired us to give them our opinion, we did it in the pulpit; and they ought to have objected against what we then said, if they thought it amiss. But we deny they had any right to put tests to us.

I found fault with his saying, that the cause of our ejection was *because we would not own the Son of God to be one God with the Father*: I said it was because we would not submit to any unscriptural test, and believed that Christ alone has authority to prescribe us a rule of faith. It seems the Gentlemen, or their scribe, think this an artful turn; but 'tis such an one, as neither they, nor their seven advisers will ever be able to answer. I declare it, and they knew my mind before they put their test, that had they requir'd my assent to any other unscriptural test, had it been the directly contrary to the proposition they offer'd, I would in the like manner have refus'd it. Christ has already prescribed me a rule of faith, which I most cheerfully receive; but no man upon earth shall prescribe me another: and without vanity I pretend to be able to tell my own faith, without the help of the Gentlemen, or any of their advisers, or their putting words into my mouth.

He sais: *No one will believe that the ejection rests only on his not agreeing to a test of unscriptural words, if he would have profess'd to believe the thing.* If the thing was scriptural, certainly it might have been

been put into scripture words, and so a sad contest would have been happily ended. But what he says is a notorious falsehood; as appears by this circumstance, that they would not accept of Mr. *Withers's* offer, first of a declaration in Bishop *Pearson's* words, nor secondly in the words of the *Nicene* creed; nothing would satisfy, unless he would come up to one of their four tests.

I said in my *Case*, concerning the calling in of the seven ministers, p. 7. "That had an equal number been chosen on both sides, some good might have been expected." This he would represent as inconsistent with my refusing Mr. *Eveleigh's* offer of conferences. The business is plain enough to an ordinary capacity, that is willing to understand it: The conferences offer'd us, were, according to my apprehension, design'd for their instructing us in their truth, and informing themselves of somewhat to charge us with, which was greatly wanted: but when the seven ministers came, they came as advisers, or arbitrators in our quarrel, whose chief business ought to have been to accommodate matters; and little good could be expected when these were chosen by one side only, and were known before-hand to be men fit to serve the turn. If this writer can not take in this difference, I am sorry for him, but care not to spend more words to help his understanding. 'Tis false that I *artfully endeavour to draw people into a belief that this* [Mr. *Eveleigh's* project] *was proposed after the seven ministers were call'd in.* I never once had the least thought or design that way; nor have I said one word to that purpose. Nay I expressly say the contrary, *Def.* p. 12. "That that had been before proposed to me." I earnestly request the Gentlemen would employ a scribe
next

next time that has some eyes at least, if he has no conscience. I am still of opinion, that I had reason to scorn the offer'd conferences, considering the nature of them, and how I had before been dealt with: nor can I see that my behaviour herein, or what I have said concerning it, was inconsistent with humility or charity.

I said in my *Defence*, p. 10. " Suppose he [a minister] thinks a violent opposition will spread the error, as it has now been tried and found true, must he be ejected for that? Or for being directed by his own prudence, rather than other mens? " This seem'd to me a material question, tho' I perceive my answerer thought it not worth a reply; and therefore only takes notice of it, to let the world know, they *think whatever the consequences of it had been, it was their duty to contend earnestly for the faith.* This is not answering me, who never insinuated it was not their duty to contend earnestly, so it were but honestly, for the faith, deliver'd in the scriptures. They might follow their prudence, and I mine, without offence, if they pleas'd, on either side. All that I censure is their making their prudence a standard for mine, and their ejecting me for not using it as such. And whereas he thinks what they have done has *not contributed to the spreading* the opinion, I am verily persuaded of the contrary; and that where there was one in it before the *September Assembly*, 1718. there are now ten, I speak modestly, who would hardly have ever thought of the matter, had it not been for the stir then begun.

He goes on: *He insinuates, Def. p. 11. as if he had actually gratified the desire of the people, and endeavour'd with all the plainness and evidence he could to clear the truth* (this must be supposed to be

the truth now in debate) whereas he never once since these disputes arose, ever asserted Christ to be the supreme God, or attempted the proof of it, or ever offer'd the least proof of the deity of the Holy Ghost; and yet because on his saying somewhat of the matter in debate, he is blamed for doing no better (Defence, p. 11.) he is discouraged from farther attempts. The ever placed twice after never once is an elegancy peculiar to this writer. In the latter end of the sentence he owns my saying somewhat of the matter in debate, and yet in the former part he seems unwilling to allow that I endeavour'd to clear the truth in debate. My business, if I took it right, was to clear the doctrine of the Bible, which I was not to learn from his party, but from the Bible itself. It could not be expected, that I should, on the two occasions wherein I treated of these matters, at the request of the people, go any farther than not only the scriptures would warrant, but than they themselves desir'd. And certainly since he owns I was blamed for what I said, he ought to commend my prudence that I desisted from the enterprize, leaving the unenvy'd honour to the mighty manager, who alone had skill to manage it to purpose, and so as to deserve no blame.

He says, p. 19. Mr. Peirce in Def. p. 11. and in almost all his papers, endeavours to prejudice people against the plainest duties [what are they?] by putting them into disgraceful words and phrases, Tests, Impositions, Inquisitions, and then makes grievous outcries against them, &c. I beg he would tell me next time what he means by tests and impositions; for I declare I know not the meaning of those words, if there was neither test nor imposition in our case. As to an inquisition, I hope I have clear'd that matter in my Letter to a subscribing

siribing minister, and therefore need say no more about it. He would fain persuade the world, we are against confessing our faith; which is false. I refuse not to confess my faith concerning any thing I am bound to believe. But I confess I look not upon my faith as much concern'd in unscriptural assertions, such as that of the seven advisers, which they are not able to shew me there. He says: *The art of sophistical wit and artificial words* [I wish he had told us what words they are; for at present I cannot imagine] *may cast a cloud on any thing, but these things seem to us very plain.* The only meaning of this sentence, unless I greatly mistake, is, that they are resolv'd to assert they are in the right, even when they have nothing to say by way of reply to the arguments urged against it. They cannot suppose me displeased with them for what I judge to be an owning of this, tho' I doubt not they had satisfied the world of the truth of the thing before.

I am glad this writer was sensible of the injury done me in the *Account*, as it was first printed. Had I known of the correction made, when I wrote my *Defence*, I should have taken notice of it, and own'd it, as I have done since. See my *Remarks*, p. 39. As he has done me justice by the correction and acknowledgment, I am satisfied as to this part; and I hope he will not reckon I did him any wrong, since 'twas not my fault, but his own, that I had such cause of complaint.

I said in my *Defence*, p. 12. "Every man must judge for himself, and not this writer for every man, when great and necessary reasons call for this open confession." He replies now, p. 20. *By the same rule the people must and will judge for themselves, when they ought to withdraw from ministers.* Who doubts it? Have I said the least

word against it? 'Tis one thing for persons to withdraw from ministers, and quite another for a few men who have no right, to take upon them to thrust out ministers. What a sad loss would this writer be at, if it were not for that one word *withdraw*, which may well enough be call'd his *artificial word*, since he uses it in a sense, in which it was never heard of before in the world? Sure this cannot be a pardonable oversight, but a wilful abuse of his readers, as well as my self, since he is so constant in it.

To go on with my *observable passages*, and his *remarks* upon them: *Mr. Peirce*, sais he, *to make the design of, offer'd conferences seem unfriendly, catches at these words*, " That every one should subscribe " to keep all that pass'd secret for a time, " and *tells the world*, " when that time was over, the " Gentlemen might use their discretion, &c. No such great catch in this. The thing was obvious of it self; and I knew it without any *explanation*, that *such a time was meant as should be agreed on by both parties*. It was at the expiration of the time so agreed on, that I supposed they might use their discretion. But to tell him the truth plainly; if they had proposed to keep what pass'd secret, without any such limitation at all, I should have refus'd the conferences, because some we were to confer with, had deceiv'd me before; and as I have not the art of dissembling my temper, I own I was very unwilling to give them an opportunity of deceiving me again.

The next *paragraph* is so vile and scandalous, that I cannot but hope it may open the eyes of many of his own party, and help them to see with what conscience he writes. The *Account* had this passage, p. 17. *Nor will these men scruple the Apostles creed, for a certain reason, tho' yet they*

they own it is not made up of scripture phrase. The design of this was to charge us with an inconsistency, viz. That whereas when the Gentlemen put a test to us in unscriptural words, we would not assent to it, but insisted upon having it put into those that were scriptural; we do not deal in like manner with the people, but insist upon their assent to a creed which is not express'd in scripture words. To clear my self of this charge, I did not pretend that I did not insist upon their assent to any thing (nor did the charge oblige me to do so) but only that I did not insist upon their assent to any thing not express'd in the words of scripture, and therefore what I could not put into such I would not insist on; which every one sees is a full vindication. But I will transcribe my answer, *Defence*, p. 15. " If he " knows I ever insist on any unscriptural form of " words, that I require men to assent to, let him " shew it: I declare I do not. Nay, as I always " in proposing the *Creed*, leave out the article of " the *descent of Christ into hell*, because I don't " believe many understand it in the sense in " which 'tis true; so I have declar'd, that if " any one sticks at any other article, I will ei- " ther put it into scripture words, or leave it " quite out. So that he may see I am very " consistent: and his *certain reason* for which he " says, *I scruple not the Apostles creed*, he may still " keep to himself; it can be none of mine, who " don't know what it is. " Behold now what wonders he can work with this plain and innocent passage! *This*, sais he, *is offer'd to let us see how consistent he is with himself in using the Creed, tho' not scripture words. 'Tis astonishing to us, if we do not mistake him* [wilfully, he should have added] *that this shall be at the choice of him that sticks at any*

any article, to have it put in scripture words, or to have it quite left out ; but this we think to be his meaning, because of that declaration of his, that we must lay communion not upon faith, but upon conversation: we make no doubt what Mr. Peirce would do, if any one stuck at that article, I believe in the Holy Ghost: but suppose the article stuck at be the very being of God, which is the first, if he will consent to leave out any, he must consent to leave out that, if it be stuck at, and such an indefinite any to be left out is equivalent to all, for if he may dispense with each, why should any be accounted necessary? I appeal now to the consciences of all men, I hardly need except this writer's, if he has any left, whether this sense put upon my words be not contrary to that which naturally offers itself. I give not the least hint, that it should be at the choice of the person that sticks at any article, whether it shall be put into scripture words, or quite left out. There was no occasion from the charge I was answering that I should suggest this; and one part of the disjunction, thus understood, would have been a mere impertinence. I ought then to have only said absolutely, If any one sticks at any article, I will leave it out, and should not have said any thing of putting it into scripture words at all. I answer only upon the supposition of mens sticking at any article, as not being express'd in scripture words, taking it for granted that they will not stick at it when I so express it. So that I thus intirely answer such mens scruples, just as I desir'd the Gentlemen to answer mine. Nor is there any article in the creed that is not already in scripture words, and that I am not able to put into such, that I will insist upon. Most of the articles are already so express'd, and the necessity of believing the
articles

articles which the scripture insists on the belief of, I never question'd. But that I would leave it to the choice of a person at baptism, whether he should profess his assent to the scripture doctrine of the Holy Ghost, of Christ, and of the very being of God, is a suggestion which I am very sure can proceed from none that know me, and are not of a very profligate conscience. But I the less wonder at it, since I know it has been suggested by one of the same party, that I believ'd little or nothing of reveal'd religion; tho' I can defy him, and the whole party, to produce the least shew of a reason for such a suggestion. And 'tis an abominable falsehood, which he here repeats, to support the most ungrounded and malicious interpretation of my words; for I can most solemnly declare the declaration he would charge me with, has been always contrary to my sentiments, as I have always likewise profess'd. Doubtless my readers will pity me that I have the vexation of such an adversary, as I heartily do the Gentlemen, that they are forced to be content with such an one for their minister, advocate, or scribe, or perhaps all three. May a merciful God never lay this unrighteous dealing to his charge.

The business of doxologies I refer to my larger account of our difference.

I go on with what he says, p. 21. *Mr. Peirce says that the referring it to the people to vote for, or against our ejection, is not a putting the Trinity or Deity of Christ to the vote, &c. But we say to put our faith to the vote, whether we should stand by those ministers as guides of our faith, that would not profess their own faith, or defend ours, but do so evidently betray it, and undermine it, is to us in effect the same thing: 'Tis false that we would not profess*

fess our own faith : nor were we under any obligation to defend theirs any farther than it agreed with the scriptures. But to pass these things ; I question whether this writer himself is capable of more wretchedly and more childishly perverting the state of the question. The refering it to the people to vote for or against our ejection, was neither a putting the Trinity and Deity of Christ, nor their faith to the vote : for when the people should have carried it either for or against our ejection, both sides would have been as much at their liberty to keep their faith as they were before, or are now ; nay they would have been as much at their liberty to adhere to, or withdraw from us. What I say ought to have been put to the vote was only, whether we had deserved to be, and should accordingly be ejected : and if that had been carried by a fair majority, we should not have complained as we now do. Till he can say somewhat to this, he does but give himself and the world a needless trouble. Besides, I have by another consideration shown that this is only an idle and frivolous pretence ; for tho' the matter is thus represented as too sacred to be put to the vote, it must yet have been actually put to the vote among the four proprietors, and, I add, the thirteen. And certainly there was far more reason to refer the ejection to the vote of the people, who had a right to vote ; than to the vote of only a few men, who had no right at all by themselves to determine it. This and some other things I took notice of in my *Defence*, p. 21. but they were not it seems *passages observable* enough to have his remarks bestowed upon them. He will give me leave to think the reason was, because he saw his cause was not defensible. The rest

rest of this *paragraph* serves only to let the reader know what he might have told him in much fewer words, that he had nothing to say for the justice of the ejection, the great point in debate; and therefore I forbear transcribing.

In my *Defence*, p. 23. " I bless God, there
" are a great many Dissenters, and especially in
" *London*, who understand the foundations of
" their cause, and have shewed themselves zealous
" for liberty." Our author in answer desires to bless God, they have such satisfaction that many of the nonsubscribers are found in their doctrine, tho' they have given, as he pretends, the greatest advantage to the enemies of the Deity of our blessed Lord, that ever they could desire.

This is nothing to me, who only speak of mens being zealous for liberty, which I esteem a privilege secured us to by the gospel, and worth contending for, however he and his friends would have wrested it from us. I make no doubt, before this stir was rais'd, ministers were generally found in the doctrine they taught, making it their business to shew people that Christ is a sufficient saviour, and the only one, and that it is absolutely necessary to come to God by him. Whatever has been lately dropt disagreeable to the gospel, has been most owing perhaps to the contest that has unhappily fallen out between brethren, who for ought I see might have maintained communion with one another, notwithstanding they differ'd in these abstruse things. However I make this double use of what our author here says : 1. That he may see, that nonsubscribing is no certain evidence of a man's not being found in his doctrine ; and yet we were ejected because we refus'd to subscribe. 2. He
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may see, that those whom he himself counts sound, and who consequently must be supposed to agree with him in doctrine, cannot approve or justify the methods he and his friends have taken. If therefore we should be thought partial in judging our case, yet he cannot imagine them to be so; and there must be the more reason to suppose, the zeal of his friends here has transported them beyond all bounds of justice and discretion.

Concerning the Dissenters who had betray'd the cause of liberty I said in my *Defence*, p. 23. "My judgment was, that they had for ever stop-
ped the mouths of all advocates for them, and
"their cause, that will pretend to talk consistent-
"ly." He replies to this, p. 22. *We trust we shall never want the assistance of Mr. Emlyn or Mr. Peirce, to defend the cause of moderate nonconformity.* This extraordinary writer is at his liberty to talk with contempt of what I have written upon that controversy. He will however give me leave to tell him, that time was, when the most considerable men of the party, who, without disparagement to his great abilities, may be thought as competent judges as himself, neither despised my assistance, nor disdained to desire it, tho' I dare say none either sought or wish'd for his. 'Tis no exercise to my patience to bear a slight so unaccountable as theirs must be, who formerly as much applauded me for what I writ upon that head. The present debates have indeed in a manner now silenced the controversy about nonconformity; but it may, and in all probability will, one time or other revive again; and then we shall see how the dissenting patrons of impositions, who must expect the attack to be made on them, will be able to justify themselves

selves against the arguments of the Churchmen. Then we shall know whether the mouths of Mr. *Lavington* and his masters will be opened, or not, and what consistent scheme they will fix upon for the defence of moderate nonconformity. Let this writer try now beforehand, if he can with all his skill advance a scheme that shall warrant the Dissenters to impose one article, and arbitrarily to eject ministers for refusing to assent to it, that will not equally warrant all the impositions and ejectments that have been ever practis'd by the Churchmen. I'll venture so far to change sides, and to speak in behalf of those I have formerly writ against, as to say, the thing is in my judgment impossible. Let any one compare the modern impositions of some with their former writings, and judge from the irreconcilable contradiction there is between them, whether I have not good reason for what I say. I cannot change my opinion concerning the true cause of nonconformity; but nonconformity sever'd from liberty appears to me, as I am persuaded it does to others, to be the most absurd and despicable cause in the world. 'Tis great pity its defence should not be left to the management of such as embrace it; a little trial may perhaps bring them to themselves again. I wish our author had not left out that clause, in citing my words, which shews what advocates for nonconformity I speak of, *viz.* "those that will pretend to talk consistently:" I never doubt nonconformity may have advocates enough like himself; but I must say 'twill be little beholden to him, unless he can defend it in a better manner than the cause he has undertaken. It has pleased me when I have perceived such kind of reflections have not fallen upon me alone,

Mr. *Withers* has been join'd with me ; whose writings I may well say, have deserved a better treatment from friends, and have obtain'd it too from more candid enemies. But if our writings were disliked by this little detractor, and his other learned friends, why did not they shew their wonderful abilities in the proper time, by doing the work better ? Why did they *then* stand idle, and careless, when thro' our unskilful management they had most reason to buckle on their harness ? I see they are not the most formidable fighters who can swagger bravely, when no enemy is in sight ; they know how to be out of the way, and take care of their own safety upon the least appearance of danger.

The next *paragraph* is answer'd already. The thing I insisted on, as necessary to be put to the vote, was not any point of faith, but only whether we should be ejected, *i. e.* in short, whether we or they should keep the place of worship, if they were resolv'd to break communion. 'Tis own'd this would have been *regular*, by which I understand that it would have been according to the rules of justice, *in a cause they could have refer'd to the determination of a vote, where conscience could be satisfied however it be decided.* Now this I say was such a cause. For why might not their conscience be as well satisfied in departing and quitting the place to us, upon a fair determination, as they expected ours should be in quitting it to them, even without such a vote ? Certainly it cannot be only weakness of judgment, that makes him so constantly misrepresent the matter he talks about. I think therefore I may well repeat it ; " That the book [the *Account*] in effect owns the main of my charge, and that the way taken was not regular. "

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In my *Case*, p. 17. I say concerning a *Pamphlet* intituled, *Arius detected*: "The whole design is
 "is to expose us to hatred and scorn; charging
 "us with things we do not own, as that Christ
 "is a creature, &c. confidently asserting that we
 "hold so, tho' we deny it; reviling us as *Arians*,
 "tho' we disown the peculiar opinion of *Arius*." The *Account* answer'd, p. 23. *This charge is scarcely true; for the book only argues, that a voluntary production is a creature; but doth not assert that those men affirm Christ to be so.* I proved in my *Defence*, p. 29. that the book did assert this, setting down some passages out of it. This was too plain to be denied. I added: "But whence can
 "he gather their notion, but from their affirmations? And if he saith this is our notion,
 "is not that the same thing? And how does he
 "know we say Christ is a voluntary production?
 "He knows *Dr. Clarke* does not venture to say so." Instead now of a fair answer to my plain and honest questions, he would bring me to his test.

Mr. Peirce, saith he, *shows himself exceeding loth, that himself and followers should be call'd Arians.* And have I not good reason? Does he think we are so different from all mankind, as that we desire to have names of reproach fix'd upon us? Does he like it when the high-church men treat the Dissenters in that manner? He goes on: *If he is no Arian, why does he not disclaim that Christ is but a voluntary production, or is but a creature?* This is nothing to his purpose. He ought to defend his good friend in publicly giving us that name: I say we have not given him any ground for it, he ought to prove we have. 'Tis in my judgment a monstrous wickedness for men to advance charges against their neighbours without ground; of which I assert that author, and

as many as have join'd with him in the cry, are notoriously guilty. And till they produce some evidence of my having affirm'd the proper *Arian* principles, to warrant this scandalous treatment, I cannot see how they can deserve any better character than that of detractors. I should think I acted wickedly, if I call'd him traitor or rebel, and charged him with holding treasonable and seditious principles ; and then endeavour'd to excuse my self the trouble of proving the charge, by saying, If he does not hold such principles, let him disclaim them. But I perceive he and I widely differ in our notions of common justice, in more cases than one. I think I have a right to demand of him and his Detector, that if they have any conscience, they will shew from some assertion of mine, they have ground to give me that name. For my part I know of no opinion I hold, that was not receiv'd in the christian church long before *Arius* was born into the world. He saies : *Two lines would do it.* But as that is more than he has a right to demand ; so he cannot reasonably expect I should gratify him so far, till he has first clear'd himself and friends of the charge of being slanderers. And as I do from my soul detest this vile method of slandering in order to pump men, I can't be complaisant enough to humour them in it. But farther, let the reader look back to the words just cited from the *Case*, and judge whether it was not unconscionable in him to call for more.

Certainly the Detector ought to have proved, that we assert Christ is a voluntary production, when he advanced his charge ; nor can our not denying it be any evidence against us, since it may be owing to our willingness to acknowledge our ignorance in the matter. For my own part,

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as I think the sonship of Christ bespeaks his derivation from the Father, and the scripture seems to me continually to go upon that supposition, I cannot but agree to it : but I own my self ignorant of the manner of the derivation. I find not that God has reveal'd it ; nor do I think it necessary for me to know, or say more of it, than he has reveal'd. Till therefore I gain more certain information, I will say nothing positively about it : and if our author thinks this will warrant him and his friends to go on in reviling me, let him take his course ; I commit the cause of my innocence to him that judges righteously.

As to what he has here cited from Dr. Clarke, the reader is to observe, that 'tis from an edition of his *Scripture doctrine* publish'd since my *Defence*. The proposition in the first edition stands thus : " Whether the Son derives his being from the Father, by necessity of nature, or by the power of his will, the scripture hath no where expressly declared. " In the edition our author cites, the Doctor speaks according to the reasoning of the primitive fathers ; in which my faith is not concern'd. Only I can't but make this remark, that tho' I don't look upon my self obliged to believe all their reasonings, yet I would be very cautious of charging them with heresy, or breaking communion with christians for holding the same opinions they did ; and much less ought the Gentlemen to have broken communion with me, when they were not able to charge me with so much as holding their opinion.

He saith, p. 23. *How honestly he has writ on this affair, and the justness of our proceedings, appears to every one that hath read our Account, and shall read this*

this Defence of it. I can freely leave the matter with all impartial judges, and the rather because I see this writer himself, tho' he has taken so long a time for writing, has not been able to say any thing to the far greatest part of my *Defence*, and the things he has said to some few passages are so very poor and trifling; and because those who liked well enough of my being ejected, and so cannot be thought partial in my favour, yet have disapprov'd the measures taken, and wish'd the thing had been otherwise managed. *And we appeal to Mr. Peirce's own conscience, whether he does not believe that it was a sense of duty engaged us to do what we have done. Our personal respect to him was as great as ever any people's was to a pastor, &c.* I am glad of this passage, because I take it to be an acknowledgment, that my other conduct did not deserve censure. And as to the appeal, I answer, That I believe some of my designing neighbours kindled in them a great zeal without knowledge, and in a matter too, wherein they were averse to the proper means of acquiring knowledge, I mean a careful and sedate comparing the reasons on both sides; and I make no question, but they might in their zeal think themselves obliged to leave me: but I find it hard to believe that any sense of duty engaged them to take the unjust method of turning me out without the people, or of reviling us with reproachful names, and persecuting us with an artfully incensed mob; nor can I think the review of these things can be satisfactory to them, if by this time they are grown cool.

He says: *Mr. Peirce hath at several times declared, as tho' he doth not know the reason why he is dismiss'd. We can't but think his conscience must*

must have smote him for such a declaration, when he knows, 'tis not for his not complying with unscriptural tests, but for his not defending our faith, and not giving us satisfaction of the soundness of his own faith: The reader sees that I did not declare, I knew not the reason why I was dismiss'd; but only that I did not know it except it were that I would not comply with unscriptural tests. I will not much quarrel with him for not expressing my declaration more clearly, because that reason is really as good as none at all. But now if that is not the whole reason of my being dismiss'd, how comes it to pass, that nothing was laid to my charge at my dismissal, and that such a compliance would have intirely prevented it? Was there any other satisfaction desired than such a compliance? Why should he in the same sentence grant and deny the same thing? The *not defending their faith* is a strange sort of a crime to ground a dismissal upon, since the scripture faith I defended according to the best of my skill, and no expression was articulated against me at my dismissal. But I have farther to add, that this seems a poor excuse, for if I had ever so defended their faith, would not they have insisted upon my compliance with their unscriptural test? Why then did they put it to Mr. Lavington? Nay, why did they at first actually dismiss Mr. *Withers* together with us, who was known to have preached against the pamphlets that gave them offence? He goes on: *but on the contrary giving us all the reasons mentioned in our Account, and this Defence of it, to believe him in those dangerous errors so many of his people were running into.* The reasons refer'd to were not alleged at my dismissal, and so are

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nothing to the purpose. I have consider'd them in another writing, and when that appears leave it to the impartial to judge. I know of no dangerous errors the people were chargeable with; and if they were, that could be no evidence against me.

'Tis added : *And here we desire the following particulars may be considered.* First, *Because he forbears, &c.* These particulars are designed as so many reasons of my dismissal, as appears by the word *because*, though it stands oddly enough. Hence then I am to learn the reason of my dismissal, and the world is to be made sensible how unreasonable I am in pretending to be ignorant of it. Let us then hear what they are.

First, *Because he forbears in any of his public prayers to give glory to the Holy Ghost at all, which he would do, did he believe his deity.* The great noise before the breach was concerning the deity of Christ; one would have thought therefore, that according to his reasoning in this place, my having all along used to give glory to Christ, should have made the Gentlemen easy with me in that respect, tho' it did not. But let not this writer be over confident in acquainting the world with my reasoning about these matters, since 'tis very possible he may be mistaken. Mr. *Lavington* has said the Father is the Son, and the Son the Father: and how does this writer know, I don't hold the same concerning the Holy Ghost, that that Gentleman does or did of the Son? and that I might not think I gave glory to the Holy Ghost, by giving it to the Father? But to tell him sincerely the reason of my conduct: I have

have taken the scripture for the only rule of my worship; and where I find any matter of speculation intricate, I choose to search what direction or example the scripture gives me about any part of worship, rather than follow the more uncertain consequences of my own opinion about such abstruse matters. Doxologies are so frequent in the Holy Scripture, that we may well expect in one place or other we should find glory ascrib'd to the Holy Ghost, if this were necessary to be done by us: now because I find neither precept to enjoin, nor example to warrant this, therefore, without inquiring into abstruser matters, I have forborn it: and for ought I see, the Gentlemen, for the same reason they dismiss'd me, may dismiss their *Bibles* also.

His second particular, p. 24. is consider'd elsewhere.

Thirdly, sais he, *Several persons who from their personal respect to Mr. Peirce, adhered to him, when the main body of the citizens withdrew, [he means, drove us out] have since left his ministry, because they can't have satisfaction from him, as to his belief of the deity of Christ and the Holy Ghost.* I remember one person once objected some texts of scripture to me, which I readily gave him such an account of as he was able to make no reply to. What may have pass'd at other times in common conversation I may not remember; and persons may have ask'd me loose questions with a design I did not perceive; but I question very much whether any have left me, as he sais, for this *reason only*, who had first sought such satisfaction of me. Our author knows too well, what other arts have been used. But now sup-

posing all this to be true, is it any evidence I knew the crime for which I was dismiss'd? Could that which happen'd after the dismissal be the cause of it?

Fourthly, *He made a demand at the meeting of the Committee in November last, of one place of scripture where the Holy Ghost was call'd God.* If this was ground enough for a dismissal, why did they not exert their authority then? But why might not I innocently ask this for my own information, when I was before men who pretended to be certain in the controversy, and so might be suppos'd able to give me an answer? I declare now, I know of no one place, where he is clearly and expressly call'd so; and as I have been taught that it is no crime for a man to confess his own ignorance, I do not see that if I had said as much then as I do now, it would in the least have justify'd their proceedings.

Fifthly, *In the hearing of two persons, when he was charged with this, That he did not believe the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost to be one God, he declared he did not: when some persons were blaming Mr. Stogdon, for having drawn a woman into these notions, the woman replied, "It was not Mr. Stogdon, but Mr. Peirce that gave me satisfaction in them."* How could I know these facts to be the cause of my dismissal, when the first of them, if I guess right, happen'd long after it? I assure him I make no such unscriptural assertions, as is that mention'd, articles of my faith. I suppose the second fact may be somewhat that has in like manner happen'd since the ejection, but as I am not able to guess

gues any thing about it, I think it needless to say any more of it. And are not these rare matters to ground an ejection upon? And fine proofs that I must know the reason of my ejection?

With reference to what he says in his concluding *paragraph*, I must say in my turn, that I am persuaded the unprejudiced part of the world will be satisfy'd by what is written on both sides, that we gave the people no cause of complaint, and that the methods taken have been arbitrary and unjust. We challenge him, and all the world, to name any one instance of *glory and honour*, which the scripture directs us to give to the Son and Holy Ghost, which we withhold from them; or any one assertion of the scripture, which we do not sincerely believe in the true sense of it, as far as we are able to perceive what that is. And what reason any can have not to expect the *light, grace, and comfort of the Holy Ghost*, by joining with us, I cannot imagine; nor do I see our author had any occasion for his uncharitable insinuation. I should think he might have perceiv'd, that it would have been as pertinent for any one to ask, how persons could expect these influences of the Holy Ghost, when they join with those who will not be content with the revelation he has made, but will take upon them to invade his office, by adding to that rule of truth which he, the spirit of truth, has given us.

As to our author, I desire him for the future to examine all I say, if he pretends to answer me, and to write fairly, and not to act contrary to his own profession, but *keep close to strict and undisguised truth*. I am apt to think the world will judge by his performance, that
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when his party discarded the principles of liberty, they did not keep strictly to those of honesty. I shall only close, in imitation of our author, with desiring my old friends to consider, with what comfort and satisfaction they can assemble to worship God in a place, which their own consciences must tell them is now thro' fraud and injustice applied to the purposes 'tis made to serve for; since in every case the Lord loves judgment, and hates robbery for burnt-offering.

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